

Report of the Committee, consisting of Dr. E. B. TYLOR, Dr. G. M. DAWSON, General Sir J. H. LEFROY, Dr. DANIEL WILSON, Mr. HORATIO HALE, Mr. R. G. HALIBURTON, and Mr. GEORGE W. BLOXAM (Secretary), appointed for the purpose of investigating and publishing reports on the physical characters, languages, industrial and social condition of the North-western Tribes of the Dominion of Canada.

THE Committee have been in active correspondence with missionaries and others stationed among the Indians, but the unsettled state of the country during the past year has made it impossible to do more than collect materials for a preliminary report; the Committee, therefore, ask that they may be reappointed, with a continuance of the grant.

Report on the Blackfoot Tribes. Drawn up by Mr. Horatio Hale.

The tribes composing the Blackfoot Confederacy, as it is commonly styled—in some respects the most important and interesting Indian communities of the North-west—have been until recently less known than any others. It seemed, therefore, that the best contribution which a single member could make to the general report of the Committee would be a special study of these tribes. This view was confirmed by the opinion of President Wilson, the only other member of the Committee who was near enough for me to consult with. With his aid a correspondence was opened with two able and zealous missionaries residing among these Indians, both of whom have replied most courteously and liberally to my inquiries. These are the Rev. Albert Lacombe, widely and favourably known as Father Lacombe, Roman Catholic Missionary among the Siksika, or proper Blackfeet Indians, and the Rev. John McLean, Missionary of the Canadian Methodist Church to the Blood and Piegan (or Kena and Piekane) tribes. Father Lacombe has been many years a missionary in the Canadian North-west, and has a very extensive knowledge of the tribes of that region. His elaborate work, the 'Grammar and Dictionary of the Cree Language,' ranks among the best contributions to American philology. Mr. McLean has been engaged in his missionary duties for five years, has prepared a grammar of the Blackfoot language, and is at present occupied in translating the Scriptures into that tongue; he has been most considerate in furnishing the information which was requested on behalf of the Committee, and is now making special researches for this object.

The unfortunate troubles of the past season have for a time interrupted the correspondence, and have left the investigations necessarily incomplete. The principal portion of the report on these Indians will therefore have to be deferred for another year. It has seemed advisable,

however, to submit a summary of the knowledge now obtained by way of introduction to the fuller account which the Committee may be able to render hereafter. With this view some other sources of information have been examined, particularly the valuable official reports and maps of the Canadian and United States Indian Departments, which have been obligingly furnished by those Departments for this purpose.

Fifty years ago the Blackfoot Confederacy held among the western tribes much the same position of superiority which was held two centuries ago by the Iroquois Confederacy (then known as the 'Five Nations') among the Indians east of the Mississippi. The tribes of the former confederacy were also, when first known, five in number. The nucleus, or main body, was—as it still is—composed of three tribes, speaking the proper Blackfoot language. These are the Siksika, or Blackfeet proper, the Kena, or Blood Indians, and the Piekanè, or Piegans (pronounced Peegans), a name sometimes corrupted to 'Pagan' Indians. To these are to be added two other tribes, who joined the original confederacy, or, perhaps more properly speaking, came under its protection. These were the Sarcees from the north, and the Atsinas from the south. The Sarcees are an offshoot of the great Athabascan stock, which is spread over the north of British America, in contact with the Eskimo, and extends in scattered bands—the Umpquas, Apaches, and others—through Oregon and California into Northern Mexico. The Atsinas, who have been variously known from the reports of Indian traders as Fall Indians, Rapid Indians, and Gros Ventres, speak a dialect similar to that of the Arapohoes, who now reside in the 'Indian Territory' of the United States. It is a peculiarly harsh and difficult language, and is said to be spoken only by those two tribes. None of the Atsinas are now found on Canadian territory, and no recent information has been obtained concerning them, except from the map which accompanies the United States Indian Report for 1884, and on which their name appears on the American Blackfoot Reservation.

The five tribes were reckoned fifty years ago to comprise not less than thirty thousand souls. Their numbers, union, and warlike spirit made them the terror of all the western Indians on both sides of the Rocky Mountains. It was not uncommon for thirty or forty war parties to be out at once against the Salish (or Flatheads) of Oregon, the Upsarokas (or Crows) of the Missouri plains, the Shoshonees of the far south, and the Crees of the north and east. The country which the Blackfoot tribes claimed properly as their own comprised the valleys and plains along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, between the Missouri and the Saskatchewan. This region was the favourite resort of the buffalo, whose vast herds afforded the Indians their principal means of subsistence. In the year 1836 a terrible visitation of the small-pox swept off two-thirds of the people, and five years later they were supposed to count not more than fifteen hundred tents, or about ten thousand souls. Their enemies were then recovering their spirits, and retaliating upon the weakened tribes the ravages which they had formerly committed.

In 1855 the United States Government humanely interfered to bring about a complete cessation of hostilities between the Blackfoot tribes and the other Indians. The Commissioners appointed for the purpose summoned the hostile tribes together, and framed a treaty for them, accompanying the act by a large distribution of presents. This judicious proceeding proved effectual. Dr. F. V. Hayden in his account of the

Indian Tribes of the Missouri Valley (published in the 'Transactions of the American Philosophical Society for 1862'), states that from the period of this treaty the Blackfoot tribes had become more and more peaceful in their habits, and were considered, when he wrote, the best disposed Indians in the North-west. He remarks that their earlier reputation for ferocity was doubtless derived from their enemies, who always gave them ample cause for attacking them. He adds: 'From my own experience among them, and from information derived from intelligent men who have spent the greater portion of their lives with them, I am convinced that they are among the most peaceable and honourable Indians in the West; and in an intellectual and moral point of view they take the highest rank among the wild tribes of the plains.'

This favourable opinion of Dr. Hayden, it may be added, is entirely in accordance with the testimony of the Indian agents and other officials of the Canadian North-west, who place the Blackfeet decidedly above the surrounding tribes in point of intelligence and honesty. At the present time, while constantly harassed on their reserves by the incursions of thievish Crees and other Indians, who rob them of their horses, they forbear to retaliate, and honourably abide by the terms of their treaty, which binds them to leave the redress of such grievances to the Dominion authorities. It has seemed proper to dwell upon this point, as the marked differences of character among the Indian tribes has been too little regarded. As a question of science and a matter of public policy, these differences deserve a careful study. The good disposition manifested by the Blackfoot tribes during the recent disturbances has displayed their natural character, and has been a fact of the utmost value to the welfare of the new settlements.

Since the general peace was established by the American Government the numbers of the Blackfeet have apparently been on the increase. Dr. Hayden reports the three proper Blackfeet tribes as numbering in 1855 about 7,000 souls. The present population of the three Canadian Reserves is computed at about 6,000, divided as follows: Blackfeet proper, 2,400; Bloods, 2,800; Piegiens, 800. On the American Reservation there are stated to be about 2,300, mostly Piegiens. This would make the total population of the three tribes exceed 8,000 souls. The adopted tribe, the Sarcees, have greatly diminished in numbers through the ravages of the small-pox. In 1870 this disease raged among them with great virulence. They were then residing on the American side, in Montana. Mr. McLean writes: 'An eye-witness told me that at the Maria's River, in Montana, there stood fully one hundred lodges, and not one contained less than ten bodies. His estimate of dead Sarcees was 1,500.' This tribe, now numbering less than 500 souls, have their Reserve near Calgary. They are reputed to be less cleanly and moral than the proper Blackfeet tribes. In this respect their habits and character correspond with those of other Athabaskan tribes.

During the past five years, as is well known, a great change has taken place in the condition of the north-western tribes through the extermination of the buffalo. The transcontinental railways have brought into the interior great numbers of hunters, armed with the most destructive weapons, who have engaged in a constant and reckless slaughter of these animals, until it is now doubtful if any are left alive. The Blackfeet have been the greatest sufferers from this cause. The buffalo were their main dependence. The animals, which roamed the plains

during the summer, were accustomed to resort to the sheltered and wooded valleys of the Blackfoot country during the winter; and thus the tribes were assured of a supply of food at all seasons. The skins furnished their clothing, their tents, and their couches. Suddenly, almost without warning, they found themselves stripped of nearly every necessary of life. The change was one of the greatest that could well befall a community. If the inhabitants of an English parish were suddenly transported to the centre of Australia, and set down there, utterly destitute, to make a living by some unknown methods of tropical agriculture, they would hardly be more helpless and bewildered than these unfortunate Indians found themselves. The Governments both of the United States and of Canada came to the rescue; but in the former country the urgency of the case was not at first fully understood, and much suffering ensued. The agent on the Blackfoot Reservation in Montana (Major Allen) states in his official report that when he entered upon his duties in April 1884 he found the Indians in a deplorable condition. The supplies of food which had been sent for them had proved insufficient, and before these could be renewed many died from actual starvation. Some stripped the bark from the saplings which grew along their creeks, and ate the inner portion to stifle the sense of hunger. On the Canadian side, fortunately, the emergency was better understood. Colonel McLeod, an able and vigilant officer, was in charge of the Mounted Police at that time, and through his forethought the necessary preparations were made. In 1879 and 1880 the buffalo disappeared from that region. Arrangements were at once made for settling the Indians on Reserves, and for supplying them with food and clothing, and teaching them to erect wooden houses and cultivate their lands. Daily rations of meat and flour were served out to them. Ploughs, cattle, and horses were furnished to them. Farm instructors were placed among them. The Indians displayed a remarkable readiness to adapt themselves to the new conditions. According to the reports of all the agents they have evinced a quickness to learn and a persevering industry which place them decidedly in advance of the other Indian tribes of that region. In 1882 more than 500,000 lbs. of potatoes were raised by the three Blackfoot tribes, besides considerable quantities of oats, barley, and turnips. The Piegans had sold 1,000 dollars' worth of potatoes, and had a large supply on hand. 'The manner in which the Indians have worked,' writes the agent, 'is really astonishing, as is the interest they have taken, and are taking, in farming.' Axes and other tools were distributed among them, and were put to good use. In November 1882 the agent writes that log-houses had 'gone up thick and fast on the Reserves, and were most creditable to the builders.' In many cases the logs were hewn, and in nearly all the houses fireplaces were built. In the same year another official—the Indian Commissioner—going through the Reserves, was surprised at the progress which he saw. He found comfortable dwellings, well-cultivated gardens, and good supplies of potatoes in root-houses. Most of the families had cooking stoves, for which they had sometimes paid as much as fifty dollars. He 'saw many signs of civilisation, such as cups and saucers, knives and forks, coal-oil lamps, and tables; and several of the women were baking excellent bread and performing other cooking operations.' Three years before these Indians were wild nomads, who lived in skin tents, hunted the buffalo, and had probably never seen a plough or an axe. These facts are recorded, not

merely as gratifying to a sense of humanity, but for their bearing on the question of the natural capacity of uncivilised men. Impartial investigation and comparison will probably show that, while some of the aboriginal communities of the American continent are low in the scale of intellect, others are equal in natural capacity, and possibly superior, to the highest of the Indo-European nations. The fundamental importance of this fact (if such it is) to the science of anthropology must be the excuse for urging its consideration in connection with the present inquiry.

The Blackfeet have been known to the whites for about a century, and during that period have dwelt in or near their present abode. There is evidence, however, that they once lived further east than at present. The explorer Mackenzie, in 1789, found them holding the south branch of the Saskatchewan, from its source to its junction with the north branch. He speaks of four tribes—the Picaneux, Blood, and Blackfeet, and the Fall Indians (Atsinas), which latter tribe then numbered about 700 warriors. Of the three former tribes he says: ‘They are a distinct people, speak a language of their own, and, I have reason to think, are travelling north-west, as well as the others just mentioned (the Atsinas); nor have I heard of any Indians with whose language that which they speak has any affinity.’

The result of Mr. McLean’s inquiries confirms this opinion of the westward movement of these Indians in comparatively recent times. ‘The former home of these people,’ he writes, ‘was in the Red River country, where, from the nature of the soil which blackened their moccasins, they were called Blackfeet.’ This, it should be stated, is the exact meaning of *Siksika*, from *siksinam*, black; and *ka*, the root of *ogkath*, foot. The meaning of the other tribal names, *Kena* and *Piekanè*, is unknown. That they were once significant cannot be doubted, but the natives are now unable to explain them, and use them merely as appellatives.

The westward movement of the Blackfeet has probably been due to the pressure of the Crees upon them. The Crees, according to their own tradition, originally dwelt far east of the Red River, in Labrador and about Hudson’s Bay. They have gradually advanced westward to the inviting plains along the Red River and the Saskatchewan, pushing the prior occupants before them by the sheer force of numbers. This will explain the deadly hostility which has always existed between the Crees and the Blackfeet.

It will seem, at first view, a perplexing circumstance that M. Lacombe, who, of all authorities, should be the best informed on this subject, and who has himself recorded this westward movement of the Crees, is disposed to question the fact of the corresponding movement of the Blackfeet. In his last letter, in reply to my inquiries, he expresses a doubt as to their former sojourn in the Red River region, and adds: ‘They affirm, on the contrary, that they came from the south-west, across the mountains—that is, from the direction of Oregon and Washington Territory. There were’ (he adds) ‘bloody contests between the Blackfeet and the Nez-percés, as Bancroft relates, for the right of hunting on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains.’ Mr. McLean, who mentions the former residence of the Blackfeet in the Red River country as an undoubted fact, also says in the same letter, ‘It is supposed that the great ancestor of the Blackfeet came across the mountains.’

Here are two distinct and apparently conflicting traditions, each

having good authority and evidence in its favour. One of the best tests of the truth of tradition is to be found in language. Applying this test in the present instance, we are led to some interesting conclusions. It has been seen that Mackenzie, to whom we owe our first knowledge of the Blackfoot tribes, declared that their language had no affinity with that of any other Indians whom he knew of. He was well acquainted with the Crees and Ojibways, who speak dialects of the great Algonkin stock, but he recognised no connection between their speech and that of the Blackfeet. Another traveller (Umfreville), whose book was published in 1791, gave a list of forty-four words of the Blackfoot language. The distinguished philologist Albert Gallatin, whose great work, the 'Synopsis of the Indian Tribes' (which still remains the best authority on North American philology), appeared in 1836, examined this list of Umfreville, and pronounced it sufficient to show that the language of the Blackfeet was 'different from any other known to us.' A few years later he received from an Indian trader a more extended vocabulary, and he then, in a second memoir on the subject, corrected his former statement, and showed that there was a clear affinity between the Blackfoot speech and the language of the Algonkin family. More recently the French missionaries made the same discovery, which seems to have been to them equally unexpected. M. Lacombe writes to me: 'The Blackfoot language, although far from, belongs to the same family as the Algic, Ojibway, Sautaux, Maskegon, and Cree. We discovered this analogy by studying the grammatical rules of these languages.'

Here will be noticed the rather remarkable fact that some of the ablest and most experienced of North American linguists have at first supposed the Blackfoot language to be distinct from all others, and have only discovered its connection with the Algonkin family by careful study. M. Lacombe has been good enough to send me a pretty extensive vocabulary of Blackfoot words, compared with the corresponding words in the Cree and Ojibway languages. He has added what, for the purpose in view, is equally important—many paradigms of grammatical forms in the Blackfoot, compared with similar forms in the Cree and Ojibway tongues. The Blackfoot language is thus shown to be, in its grammar, purely Algonkin. The resemblance is complete in the minutest forms, and in examining these alone it would seem incomprehensible that any doubt of the connection of this language with that stock could have been entertained. But when we turn to the vocabulary, by which the first judgment of a language is necessarily formed, the origin of the early error becomes apparent. Many of the most common words are totally different from the corresponding words in the Algonkin languages. Others, which are found on careful examination to be radically the same as the corresponding Algonkin terms, are yet so changed and distorted that the resemblance is not at first apparent. Of this variation and distortion the numerals afford a good example. It should be mentioned that in the Indian words which follow, the vowels are to be pronounced as in Italian or German, and the consonants generally as in English. The only peculiarities are in the *j*, which has the French sound (like *z* in *azure*), and the *q*, which I have employed to express a sound resembling the German guttural *ch*, as heard in *lachen*. Mr. McLean writes this sound with *ch*, as in German, and M. Lacombe with *r*. It seems to be a trilled guttural, approaching the sound which French philologists designate as the *r* grasseyé.

	Blackfoot	Cree	Ojibway
One	nitokiskam	peyak	pejik
two	natokam	nijo	nij
three	newowiskam	nisto	nisswi
four	nijoin	newo	niwin
five	nijitji	niyanan	nanan
six	nawo	ningotwasik	ningotwasswi
seven	ikitchike	tepakoup	nijwasswi
eight	nanisho	ayenanew	nishwasswi
nine	pikkiso	kekamitatat	jangasswi
ten	kepo	mitatat	mitaswi
twenty	najippo	nijitano	nijitana
thirty	neppo	nistomitano	nissimitana
one hundred	kepippo	mitatato-mitano	ningotwak

Other words in ordinary use will show the total unlikeness in some cases, and the distorted resemblance in others:—

	Blackfoot	Cree	Ojibway
God	omakkatose	kije-manito	kije-manito
heaven	spoutch	kitchi kijik	kitchi kijik
day	kristikoy	kijikaw	kijikat
night	kokoy	tibiskaw	tibikkat
man	matapi	ayisiyiniw	anisinabe
woman	akew	iskwew	ikkwe
boy	saqkomapi	napesis	kwiwisens
girl	akekowan	iskwesis	ikkwesens
sun	natous	pisim	gisis
earth	tchaqkoum	askiy	akki
water	oqki	nipiy	nipi
fire	tchi	iskoutew	iskoutew
river	niyetaqkay	sipiy	sipi
lake	omaxikimi	sakahigan	sakahigan
house	napi-oyis	waskahigan	wakkahigan
knife	stowan	mokkouman	mokkouman
kettle	iska	askik	akik
tree	mistis	mistek	mittik
my father	n'inna	n'ottawiy	n'oss
my mother	nikrista	ningawiy	ninge
my son	n'oqkowa	nikosis	nigwis
my daughter	nit'ana	nit'anis	nind'anis
my head	n'otokan	n'istikwan	n'istigwan
my mouth	n'ahoy	n'int-on	nind-on
my teeth	n'orpikisth	nipita	nipita
my skin	n'otokis	n'asakay	ninagai
my tongue	n'atchini	nit'eyaniy	nin'tenani
my heart	n'oskitchipappi	ni-teh	ni-teh
my blood	n'ahaban	ni-mik	ni-mik
my leg	n'oqkat	n'iskat	nikat

No one who examines this list will wonder that the connection between the Blackfoot and the other Algonkin tongues was not apparent to those who had to judge from brief and rude vocabularies of the former language. But it will be noticed that the possessive pronoun 'my' is evidently expressed by the same prefix *ni* (or *n'*) in all three languages. Pursuing this trace we compare the personal pronouns, and find a close resemblance, the difference being mainly in the terminations:—

	Blackfoot	Cree	Ojibway
I	nistowa	niya	nin
thou	kistowa	kiya	kin
he	oustoye	wiya	win
we	nistoninan	niyanan	ninawind
ye	kistowawa	kiyawa	kinawa
they	oustowawa	wiyawa	winawa

In the possessive prefixes the resemblance is still more notable. Thus in the Blackfoot language *n'otas* means 'my horse, or dog' (the same word, oddly enough, applying in this form to both animals); and in Cree *n't'em* has the same meaning. These words are thus varied with the possessive pronouns and in the two numbers:—

	Blackfoot	Cree
My horse (or dog)	<i>n'otas</i>	<i>n't'em</i>
thy " "	<i>k'otas</i>	<i>kit'em</i>
his " "	<i>otas</i>	<i>otema</i>
our " "	<i>n'otasinan</i>	<i>n't'eminan</i>
your " "	<i>k'otasinan</i>	<i>kitemiwaw</i>
their " "	<i>otasiwaw</i>	<i>otemiwawa</i>
my horses (or dogs)	<i>n'otasiks</i>	<i>n't'emak</i>
thy " "	<i>k'otasiks</i>	<i>kit'emak</i>
his " "	<i>otasiks</i>	<i>otema</i>
our " "	<i>notasinaniks</i>	<i>n't'eminanak</i>
your " "	<i>kotasiwaweaks</i>	<i>kitemiwawok</i>
their " "	<i>otasiwaweaks</i>	<i>otemiwawa</i>

So we may compare *n'inna*, my father, in Blackfoot, with *n'oss*, my father, in Ojibway.

	Blackfoot	Ojibway
My father	<i>n'inna</i>	<i>n'oss</i>
thy " "	<i>k'inna</i>	<i>k'oss</i>
his " "	<i>ounni</i>	<i>ossan</i>
our " "	<i>n'innan</i>	<i>n'ossinan</i>
your " "	<i>kinawaw</i>	<i>k'ossiwa</i>
their " "	<i>onniwaw</i>	<i>ossiwan</i>
my fathers	<i>n'innaeks</i>	<i>nossag</i>
thy " "	<i>k'innaeks</i>	<i>kossag</i>
his " "	<i>ounnieks</i>	<i>ossan</i>
our " "	<i>n'innaniks</i>	<i>n'ossinanig</i>
your " "	<i>kinaweks</i>	<i>k'ossiwig</i>
their " "	<i>ounniwaweaks</i>	<i>ossiwan</i>

It will be seen that the close resemblance in grammar is as striking as the wide difference in the vocabulary. These facts admit of but one explanation. They are the precise phenomena to which we are accustomed in the case of mixed languages. In such languages—of which our English speech is a notable example—we expect the grammar to be derived entirely from one source, while the words will be drawn from two or more. Furthermore, wherever we find a mixed language we infer a conquest of one people by another. In the present instance we may well suppose that when the Blackfoot tribes were forced westward from the Red River country to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, they did not find their new abode uninhabited. It is probable enough that the people whom they found in possession had come through the passes from the country west of those mountains. If these people were overcome by the Blackfeet, and their women taken as wives by the conquerors, two results would be likely to follow. In the first place, the language would become a mixed speech, in grammar purely Algonkin, but in the vocabulary largely recruited from the speech of the conquered tribe. A change in the character of the amalgamated people would also take place. The result of this change might be better inferred if we knew the characteristics of both the constituent races. But it may be said that a frequent, if not a general, result of such a mixture of races is the production of a people of superior intelligence and force of character.

The circumstances thus suggested may account, not only for the peculiarities of the language and character of the Blackfeet tribes, but also for the different traditions which are found among them in regard to their origin and former abode. It would be very desirable to trace that portion of the Blackfoot vocabulary which is not of Algonkin origin to its source in the language of some other linguistic stock. To do this would require a careful comparison of this foreign element with the various languages spoken in their vicinity, and particularly with those of the tribes west of the Rocky Mountains. For such a comparison there has been neither time nor adequate material, and this interesting subject of inquiry must be left for another occasion.

The religion of these tribes (applying this term to their combined mythology and worship) resembles their language. It is in the main Algonkin, but includes some beliefs and ceremonies derived from some other source. Father Lacombe's account of their cosmogony and their deities cannot be better given than in his own clear and pithy style. In their view, as in that of the Lenape and other Algonkin nations, there were two creations: the primary, which called the world into existence, and of which they have but a vague idea; and the secondary, which found the world an expanse of sea and sky (with, it would seem, a few animals disporting themselves therein), and left it in its present state. 'The primitive creation,' writes M. Lacombe, 'is attributed to a superior divinity, whom they call the Creator (*Apistotokiw*). This divinity, however, is in some manner identified with the sun (*Natōs*). The earth itself is believed to be a divinity of some kind, for, in their invocations, if they call the sun "our father" (*Kinnon*), they call the earth "our mother" (*Kikristonnon*). It seems also that the moon is considered to be one and the same divinity with the sun. At any rate, in the invocations it is designated by the same name, *Natōs*. Yet it is often said to be the "old woman," the consort of the sun. The whole of this is confused enough in the minds of the Indians to render them unable to give, when questioned, exact explanations.

'As to the secondary creation, if it may be so styled, the Indian account runs as follows: At a certain time it happened that all the earth was covered with water. The "Old Man" (*Napiw*) was in a canoe, and he thought of causing the earth to come up from the abyss. To put his project into execution he used the aid of four animals—the duck, the otter, the badger, and the musk-rat. The musk-rat proved to be the best diver. He remained so long under water that when he came to the surface he was fainting, but he had succeeded in getting a little particle of earth, which he brought between the toes of his paw. This particle of earth the "Old Man" took, and blowing on it he swelled it to such an extent as to make the whole earth of it. Then it took him four days to complete his work, and make the mountains, rivers, plants, and beasts. (This number *four* is a fatidical one in the legends of these Indians.) The "Old Man" worked two days more in order to make the first woman, for after the first day's work he had not succeeded in making anything graceful. When the first woman, after much toil, was completed, a sort of council was held, in which the woman opposed every one of *Napiw's* propositions that would have been very favourable to the welfare of mankind. So we must conclude that all the evil on the earth comes from the woman's contradictions will.'

This *Napiw*, or 'Old Man,' adds Father Lacombe, 'appears again in

many other traditions and legendary accounts, in which he is associated with the various kinds of animals, speaking to them, making use of them, and especially cheating them, and playing every kind of trick. In these legends Napiw comes down from the high position of creator to a much lower one, and appears not unlike to a buffoon and treacherous rascal. I will mention only that, according to the account of the Indians, the "Old Man" is said to have come from the south-west, across the mountains; and after a prolonged sojourn in these countries he went toward the north-east, where he disappeared, and nobody has heard of him since. The Indians point out the place where the "Old Man" played with the Coutonay Indians, not far from the Porcupine Hills; on another spot he slept; and on a hill not far from Red-deer River any one can see at the present day the place where Napiw came down by sliding.'

Those who have read Schoolcraft's 'Algic Researches,' Mr. Leland's 'Algonquin Legends,' and, above all, Dr. Brinton's 'Myths of the New World,' will recognise in Napiw the most genuine and characteristic of all the Algonkin divinities. In every tribe of this widespread family, from Nova Scotia to Virginia, and from the Delaware to the Rocky Mountains, he reappears under various names—Manabosho, Michabo, Wetuks, Glooskap, Wisaketjak, Napiw—but everywhere with the same traits and the same history. He is at once a creator, a defender, a teacher, and at the same time a conqueror, a robber, and a deceiver. But the robbery and deceit, it would seem, are usually for some good purpose. He preserves mankind from their enemies, and uses the arts and craft of these enemies to subdue and destroy them. In Dr. Brinton's view, his origin is to be found in a nature-myth, representing, 'on the one hand, the unceasing struggle of day with night, of light with darkness, and, on the other, that no less important conflict which is ever waging between the storm and sunshine, the winter and summer, the rain and clear sky.'

Napiw, the 'old man,' has, it seems, other names in the Blackfoot tongue. He is known as *Kenakakatsis*, 'he who wears a wolfskin robe,' and *Mik-orkayew*, 'he who wears a red-painted buffalo-robe.' These names have probably some reference to legends of which he is the hero. The name of the creator, *Apistotokiw*, as explained by M. Lacombe, offers a good example of the subtle grammatical distinctions which abound in the Siksika (or Blackfoot) speech, as in the other Algonkin tongues. The expression 'he makes,' or 'he creates' (which, like other verbal forms, may be used as a noun), can be rendered in four different forms. *Apistototsim* signifies 'he makes,' when the complement, or thing made, is expressed, and is an inanimate object. *Apistotoyew* is used when the expressed object is animate. *Apistotakiw* is the indefinite form, used when the complement, or thing made, is not expressed, but is understood to be inanimate; and, finally, *Apistotokiw*, the word in question, is employed when the unexpressed object is supposed to be animate. The world, therefore, as first created, was, in the view of the Blackfoot cosmologist, an animated existence.

But while these beliefs are all purely Algonkin, the chief religious ceremony of the Blackfoot tribes is certainly of foreign origin. This is the famous 'sun-dance,' to which they, like the Dakota tribes and some of the western Crees, are fanatically devoted. That this ceremony is not properly Algonkin is clearly shown by the fact that among the tribes of that stock, with the sole exception of the Blackfeet and a few of the western Crees, it is unknown. Neither the Ojibways of the lakes nor any of the numerous tribes east of the Mississippi had in their worship a

trace of this extraordinary rite. The late esteemed missionary among the Dakotas, the Rev. Stephen R. Riggs (author of the 'Dakota Grammar and Dictionary') says of this ceremony: 'The highest form of sacrifice is *self-immolation*. It exists in the "sun-dance," and in what is called "vision-seeking." Some, passing a knife under the muscles of the breast and arms, attach cords thereto, which are fastened at the other end to the top of a tall pole, raised for the purpose; and thus they hang suspended only by those cords, without food or drink, for two, three, or four days, gazing upon vacancy, their minds intently fixed upon the object in which they wish to be assisted by the deity, and waiting for a vision from above. Others, making incisions in the back, have attached, by hair-ropes, one or more buffalo-heads, so that every time the body moves in the dance a jerk is given to the buffalo-heads behind. This rite exists at present among the western bands of the Dakotas in the greatest degree of barbarity. After making the cuttings in the arms, breast, or back, wooden setons—sticks about the size of a lead-pencil—are inserted, and the ropes are attached to them. Then, swinging on the ropes, they pull until the setons are pulled out with the flesh and tendons; or, if hung with the buffalo-heads, the pulling-out is done in the dance by the jerking motion, keeping time with the music, while the head and body, in an attitude of supplication, face the sun, and the eye is unflinchingly fixed upon it.'

My correspondent, the Rev. Mr. McLean, sends me a minute and graphic account of this ceremony as he witnessed it, in June last, on one of the Blackfoot Reserves, when most of the Kena, or Blood Indians, were present as actors or spectators. His narrative is too long for insertion here in full, but the concluding portion will show the resolute constancy with which this sacrifice of self-immolation is performed—some new features being added, which are not found in the brief account of Mr. Riggs, though they may possibly belong also to the Dakota ceremony.

'This year several persons, young and old, who had made vows during times of sickness or danger, had a finger cut off by the first joint, as an offering to the sun; and others had the operation of cutting their breasts and backs. The old woman who cut the fingers off held the suppliant's hand up to the sun, and prayed; then placed it upon a pole on the ground, laid a knife on the finger, and with a blow from a deer's-horn scraper severed the member. The severed piece was taken up, held toward the sun, and the prayer made, when it was dropped into a bag containing similar members. This ceremony was gone through by each in turn. After this was done each carried an offering, and, climbing the sacrificial pole with the face reverently turned toward the sun, placed the offering on the top of the pole. This year seven or eight persons went through the above ceremony. The other sacrificial ceremony consisted of the slitting of the flesh in two pieces in each breast. A wooden skewer was placed through each breast; a rope fastened to the sacrificial pole was placed around each skewer; and then the suppliant, whistling upon the bone-whistle, jumped about until the flesh gave way. In some instances the flesh was cut so deeply that the men had to press heavily upon the performers' shoulders in order to tear it away. The "shield ceremony" was the same process, only performed on the back, and the rope with a shield attached fastened to the skewers, and the ceremony continued until the suppliant was relieved.'

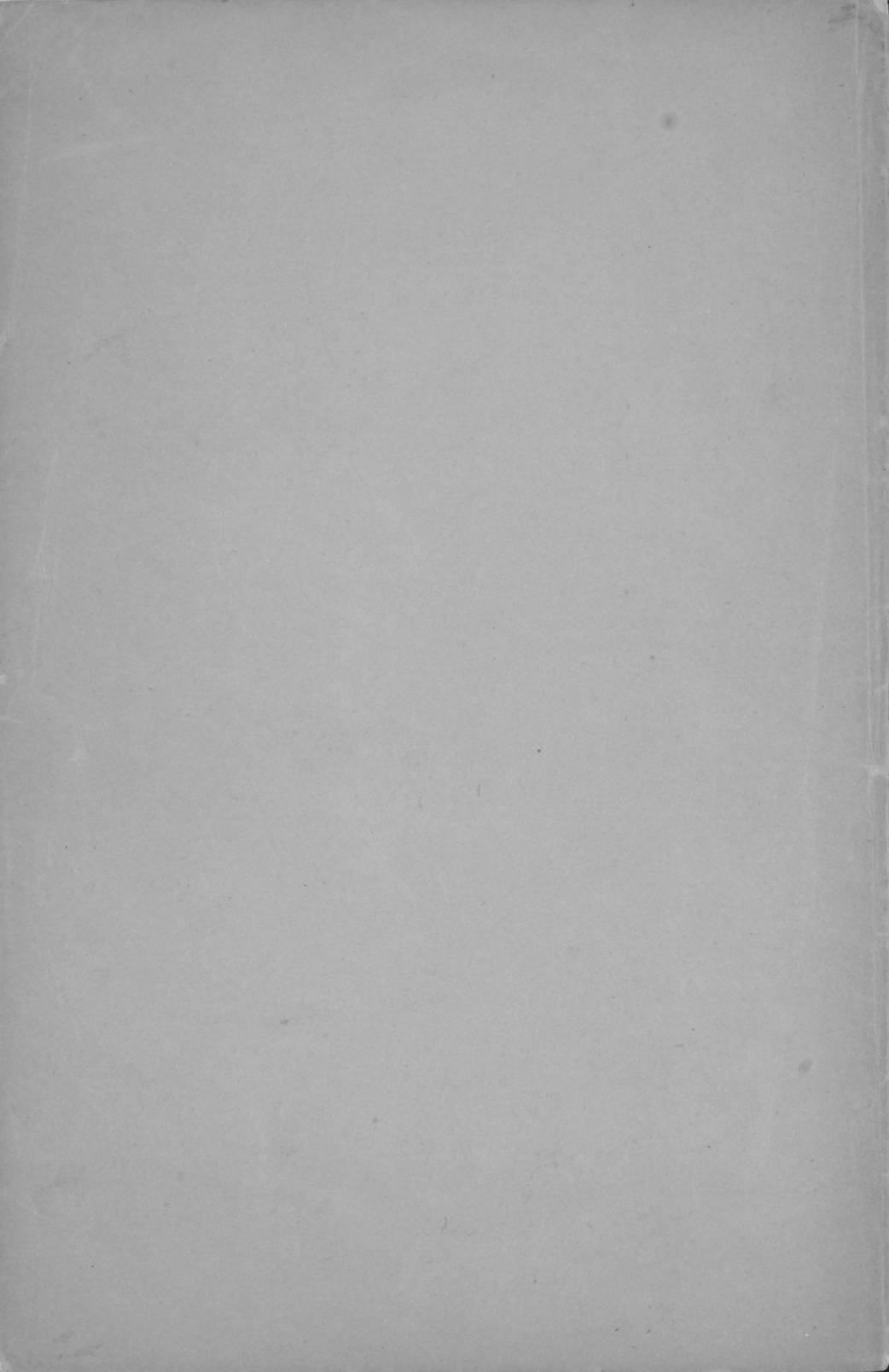
Mr. Riggs, it will be noticed, says that the ceremony was most zealously performed among the most westerly of the Dakota tribes, that

is, those which are nearest to the Rocky Mountains. We are thus led to suppose that it may have had its origin among the tribes west of the mountains. Possibly the Blackfeet may have learned it from the tribe from which they acquired the foreign element of their language, and they may have taught it to the western Dakotas and Crees in their neighbourhood. In any case it is clear that they have a mixed religion, as well as a mixed language—which are both facts of considerable interest in ethnological science.

The form of government among the Blackfeet, as among the Algonkin tribes generally, is exceedingly simple, offering a striking contrast to the elaborately complicated systems common among the nations of the Iroquois stock. Each tribe has a head-chief, and each band of which the tribe is composed has its subordinate chief; but the authority of these chiefs is little more than nominal. The office is not hereditary. The bravest or richest are commonly chosen; but in what manner the election is made is not stated. Formerly the principal function of the head-chief consisted in deciding on the question of peace or war. At present it is limited to fixing the place of the camp, or directing a change of encampment. He presides in the council of his tribe, and is, in a conference with other nations, the representative and spokesman of his people.

The term 'confederacy' commonly applied to the union of the Blackfoot tribes is somewhat misleading. There is no regular league or constitution binding them together. 'The tribes are separate,' writes Mr. McLean, 'and the bonds of union are the unity of religious belief, social customs, and language. They united against a common enemy, but I have never heard of their fighting against each other.' Father Lacombe's account is similar. 'The Blackfeet,' he writes, 'have no league or confederation, properly so called, with councils and periodical reunions. They consider themselves as forming one family, whose three branches or bands are descended from three brothers. This bond of kinship is sufficient to preserve a good understanding among them.' They can hardly be said to have a general name for the whole community, though they sometimes speak of themselves as *Sawketakia*, or 'men of the plains,' and occasionally as *Netsepoÿè*, 'or people who speak one language.'

Whether the system of clans, gentes, or totems, as they are variously styled by different writers, is found among the Blackfoot tribes is uncertain, the replies to inquiries on that subject being thus far somewhat indefinite. This system is regarded by some eminent ethnologists as one of general prevalence, marking a certain stage in the progress of society. Others consider it to be merely a special and local manifestation of the associative impulse, frequently important, but by no means universal or essential in any stage. The fact that, while it prevails among the Iroquois, the Dakotas, and the Ojibways, it is not found among the Crees or the tribes of Oregon, seems to lend countenance to this view, and gives, at all events, particular interest to the inquiry in the present case. This and other questions remain for future investigation. For the reasons which have been stated, the present report is unavoidably imperfect. It is offered chiefly for the purpose of preserving the information which has already been obtained from sources of the highest authority, and of thus affording a trustworthy basis for further inquiry.



Report of the Committee, consisting of Dr. E. B. TYLOR, Dr. G. M. DAWSON, General Sir J. H. LEFROY, Dr. DANIEL WILSON, Mr. HORATIO HALE, Mr. R. G. HALIBURTON, and Mr. GEORGE W. BLOXAM (Secretary), appointed for the purpose of investigating and publishing reports on the physical characters, languages, industrial and social condition of the North-western Tribes of the Dominion of Canada.

THE Committee have been in active correspondence with missionaries and others stationed among the Indians, but the unsettled state of the country during the past year has made it impossible to do more than collect materials for a preliminary report; the Committee, therefore, ask that they may be reappointed, with a continuance of the grant.

Report on the Blackfoot Tribes. Drawn up by Mr. Horatio Hale.

The tribes composing the Blackfoot Confederacy, as it is commonly styled—in some respects the most important and interesting Indian communities of the North-west—have been until recently less known than any others. It seemed, therefore, that the best contribution which a single member could make to the general report of the Committee would be a special study of these tribes. This view was confirmed by the opinion of President Wilson, the only other member of the Committee who was near enough for me to consult with. With his aid a correspondence was opened with two able and zealous missionaries residing among these Indians, both of whom have replied most courteously and liberally to my inquiries. These are the Rev. Albert Lacombe, widely and favourably known as Father Lacombe, Roman Catholic Missionary among the Siksika, or proper Blackfeet Indians, and the Rev. John McLean, Missionary of the Canadian Methodist Church to the Blood and Piegan (or Kena and Piekanè) tribes. Father Lacombe has been many years a missionary in the Canadian North-west, and has a very extensive knowledge of the tribes of that region. His elaborate work, the 'Grammar and Dictionary of the Cree Language,' ranks among the best contributions to American philology. Mr. McLean has been engaged in his missionary duties for five years, has prepared a grammar of the Blackfoot language, and is at present occupied in translating the Scriptures into that tongue; he has been most considerate in furnishing the information which was requested on behalf of the Committee, and is now making special researches for this object.

The unfortunate troubles of the past season have for a time interrupted the correspondence, and have left the investigations necessarily incomplete. The principal portion of the report on these Indians will therefore have to be deferred for another year. It has seemed advisable,

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